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Boston, Dec. 25, 1878.

My Dear Friend:

It affords me much gratification to learn that the question of military drill in our public schools is to be discussed at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association at Worcester on the 27th instand; because I feel very confident that the verdict of the Association will be emphatically expressed both against the propriety and the utility of such an enforcement. The attempt made some time ago to subject every lad of fourteen years and upward to be thus drilled in the schools aforesaid throughout the Commonwealth, by an enactment of the Legislature, having been defeated, the local authorities in Boston and other cities have undertaken to make this a compulsory part of the common school system within their limits; and if this abuse of official trust and perversion of the specific object ~~object~~ of educational training be allowed to go unrebuked, the bad example may lead to making that general and uniform in every part of the Commonwealth which is now ~~exceptional~~ ~~and~~ limited, and which ought not to be tolerated ~~under~~ ~~any~~ ~~circumstances~~ in any instance.

The plea that is made in behalf of this compulsory drilling, that it will prove advantageous to the physical development of the pupils, is not even plausible, because it is an assumption that there is no other method of exercise that can be resorted to with equal

benefit; whereas, it is not comparable to any well-regulated system of gymnastics, which would unquestionably certainly not violate any conscientious scruples, and which would unquestionably commend itself to general approval. Besides, the physical advantage of the military drill sinks into insignificance in comparison with the demoralization which is inseparable from thus imbuing the youthful mind with warlike feelings and sentiments. Instead of "studying the things that make for peace", it is a subtle and pregnant device to cultivate that spirit of ambition, unforgiveness, and bloody retaliation, which from time immemorial has caused nation to lift up sword against nation, and slay millions upon millions of the human race. ¶ But, aside from the question of peace or war, our common school system is supported by a common tax, and nothing extraneous to its well-defined and universally approved objects of instruction should be enforced upon it, especially when coming directly and needlessly in conflict and needlessly with the conscientious scruples of a very considerable portion of the people.

Yours for a just discrimination,
Nathl. T. Allen. Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Ms. A. 1.1.1 v. 9, p. 61A